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Pat. App. Not known - US phase of PCT/EP03/02721

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1-7 (canceled)

1 8. (new) In combination with a vessel at nonatmospheric
2 pressure and with an elongated lance having an end provided with a
3 nozzle, a nozzle-changing system comprising:
4 a support tube fixed to and opening into the vessel at a
5 nozzle seat, the lance being fittable in the tube in an inner
6 position with the nozzle fitted to the seat;
7 a main valve provided on the tube outward of the seat and
8 displaceable between a closed position and an open position;
9 a plurality of seal rings spaced along the tube outward
10 of the valve and fittable with the lance in the tube to form
11 respective annular compartments in the tube around the lance; and
12 means including purge valves opening into the compart-
13 ments for admitting fluids into and draining fluids from the
14 compartments.

1 9. (new) The nozzle-changing system defined in claim 8
2 wherein the seal rings include an outer seal ring, an intermediate
3 seal ring between the outer ring and the main valve and forming
4 with the outer seal ring an outer compartment, and an inner seal
5 ring between the intermediate ring and the main valve and forming
6 with the intermediate seal ring an intermediate compartment and
7 with the main valve an inner compartment, the purge valves includ-
8 ing respective outer, intermediate, and inner valves opening into
9 the compartments.

1 10. (new) The nozzle-changing system defined in claim 9,
2 further comprising
3 means including a drain valve connected underneath the
4 intermediate compartment for draining fluid therefrom.

1 11. (new) The nozzle-changing system defined in claim 9,
2 further comprising
3 supplies of the blocking fluid connected to the outer and
4 intermediate purge valves.

1 12. (new) The nozzle-changing system defined in claim 8,
2 further comprising
3 a guide in the tube aligned with the seat and engageable
4 with the lance for coaxial alignment of the lance in the tube and
5 nozzle in the seat.

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1 13. (new) The nozzle-changing system defined in claim 8
2 wherein the seat is flat.

1 14. (new) The nozzle-changing system defined in claim 8
2 wherein the seat is tapered and centered on an axis of the tube.